

# COMMUNITY CONSCIENCE

SUPPORTING HUMAN SERVICES UNDER ONE ROOF

## Annual Non-Profit Report 2020



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## Mission

**The mission of Community Conscience is to provide a single location where human service programs are available and accessible at no cost to recipients and to maximize coordination among agencies.**

### *Message from the Executive Director*

In 2020 there were many changes as the world braced for a deadly pandemic. Community Conscience was able to have our annual fundraiser, the Mardi Gras Ball, but 10 days later there was a stay-at-home order in effect. Due to the shutdowns many people lost their jobs and in turn began to have problems keeping their homes and vehicles. This created a new population of clients needing services for the first time. Community Conscience was here to help. Although our conference room closed for gatherings, we were able to continue serving the community through our phone and email referral program. Before the pandemic we averaged seven to ten referral phone calls a month. Those numbers rose to 50.



The non-profits housed in our building pivoted in many ways to keep providing assistance to their clients:

- Counseling and training sessions became virtual for all agencies. These included mental health check-ins, support for persons with disabilities, family violence prevention, parenting classes, exercise programs, doctor appointments, professional legal advice, and grief counseling.
- Homeless services were moved outdoors at the Human Services Center to provide daily food, mail, clothing and hygiene items to a growing number of people in need.
- Project Room Key housed the majority of the homeless population in a local motel for several months.
- The Meals on Wheels program expanded from delivering 2,500 meals a week to more than 4,000.
- New free programs for isolated seniors emerged to meet their needs including a food and paper goods pantry for delivery, Covid-19 Tool Kits, an errand service, and zoom birthday parties.

We also saw an increase in requests from people asking how to help. Volunteers stepped up to donate sack lunches, hand sew masks, deliver meals to seniors, donate warm clothing and blankets to the homeless. There are many heroes in our community!

Robin Britt  
Executive Director

## What is Community Conscience?

Community Conscience owns a 22,000 square foot building, the Human Services Center, where we provide rent-free space to 13 human service non-profit organizations. This allows charities to focus on their programs instead of raising funds to pay rent. It enables charities with main offices in other areas of California to have a branch office in Thousand Oaks, thereby extending their programs to the Conejo Valley. Along with free rent, the charities also have the benefit of landscaping, maintenance of public areas, janitorial services, security patrol, and the use of a conference room for meetings.



Each non-profit tenant is a 501(c) (3) organization and has its own governing board. They each have their own funding, missions, and programs. The programs and services delivered by the charities vary and provide them with the opportunity to refer clients to each other. The partnerships of the organizations are truly successful. Working as allies, the organizations share resources and space in an effort to help as many people as possible.

The ability to receive services from multiple organizations at the same location is also of great benefit to clients of the charities. Many of the clients rely on public transportation, rides from others, or have to walk to obtain services. Traveling to multiple locations for help can be difficult or even impossible.

Another element that contributes to the success of the Human Services Center is the addition of Ventura County Human Services Agency as a tenant. This works in two ways. A co-operative fair market lease agreement with the County of Ventura provides funds to Community Conscience. This agency makes available valuable services to many clients of the charities. Having the resources of these government programs such as Calfresh (food stamps), Medi-Cal, Cal/WIN, Cal/Works, Employment Services, and a job resource center is key to helping low-income individuals and families find assistance. The County of Ventura Human Services Agency also refers its clients to the charities in our building for additional assistance.

Community Conscience provides a telephone referral service that helps individuals and other charities locate needed services. The most requested services are help with paying rent, utility bills, and homeless services. In addition, two or three people come to our office per day seeking assistance referrals. We provide a brochure rack with information about agencies housed in our building as well as other relevant local assistance programs, classes, or events in the community.

## **Program Impacts**

According to responses to a survey done by Community Conscience in August 2020, about 53,500 people were served by programs from the agencies at the Human Services Center. The non-profits in our building collectively save almost \$300,000.00 each year in rent. This savings can be passed on directly to their clients in the form of services.

All non-profit organizations housed in the Human Services Center reported in the survey that without rent-free office space they would have to drastically reduce or eliminate their programs and staff in the Conejo Valley. Losing an arrangement of rent-free space would severely affect delivery of their services.

The ongoing goal of Community Conscience is to maximize the available space in the building to serve the community and make the biggest impact possible.

## **The organizations operating at the Human Services Center in 2020**

**Autism Society Ventura County**

**Community Conscience**

**Conejo Free Clinic**

**Conejo Youth Employment Service**

**County of Ventura - Human Services Agency**

**Fit 4 The Cause**

**Holy Family Services**

**Hospice of the Conejo**

**Interface Children and Family Services**

**Lutheran Social Services of Southern California**

**Ohana Health**

**PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center**

**Senior Concerns Bargain Boutique**

**Villa Esperanza Services**

## 2020 Mardi Gras Ball

February 29, 2020

Hyatt Westlake Regency Hotel



King John Bradley and Queen June Glasmeier

The Mardi Gras Ball was one of the last large gatherings in the Conejo Valley in 2020. Attendance was a little lower than usual due to growing concerns of Covid-19. Our supporters were very generous and ensured Community Conscience would have funding to continue budgeted operations. We broke all previous records in support from major sponsors bringing in \$61,885.00. This was the first year of using a mobile bidding platform for the silent auction. People who did not attend the ball in person could still bid on items. The checkout process was a very organized experience for guests. The Riverboat Dixieland Jazz Band entertained guests with delightful music during the champagne reception. The gourmet dinner and wine were outstanding, followed by a very exciting live auction with California Coast Auctions. Next our guests danced the night away to the Fifth Avenue Orchestra.



## 2020 Mardi Gras Diamond Sponsor



### Gold Sponsors

Barbara Ashcraft

Hugh & Keets Cassar

California American Water

California Lutheran University

GPM

Hutchison, Mikkelsen, and Prescott Families

Cheryl Klepper – Jacque & Greg Lockwood

Manchester Financial

Montecito Bank & Trust

Phyllis & Wayne Rickert

Ventura County Credit Union

### Silver Sponsors

Greater Conejo Valley Chamber of Commerce

Larry Marquart

Montecito Bank & Trust

### Bronze Sponsors

Cecilia and Frank Bellinghiere, Dr. Frank Dawson, Margaret Fieweger,

Oak Asset Management, Chatsworth Products, Premier America,

Barbaras Development – Marta & Bruce Rothwell, Ron & Pat Grant,

Hospice of the Conejo, Sunset Hills Women's Golf,

David & Carol Freeman, Fran Brough & Chuck Cunningham,

J. Blum & Associates – Raymond James Wealth Management

## Major Plumbing Repair

In December of 2019 we began to have problems with water backing up in the shower and toilet of Lutheran Social Services (LSS). There were simultaneous problems with the public bathroom toilets indicating a major plumbing problem somewhere in the pipes. We had a plumbing company look with a camera at all of the pipes. There were two issues discovered. One was the main lead pipe that leads from our building to the sewer had a lot of corrosion. It is located under the rocks in the landscaping on the Hillcrest side of the building. Material that had been flushed could easily get caught. The plumbing crew dug a trench in the landscaping to remove the old, corroded copper pipes and replaced them with PVC. We had hydro-jetting performed on the remaining pipes to clear out build up. The repair on the sewer pipe allowed a new access point to be installed, enabling the hydro-jet process to be effective. This project passed City inspection and the landscaping was replaced.



Secondly there are pipes that connect under the flooring in the LSS laundry room. These pipes carry water from several toilets, the washing machine, and shower. This connection had a collapse causing the connecting pipes to become displaced. This displacement caused things flushed to easily get caught and block the pipe. This collapse allowed a little water to continually escape under the slab of the building. The repair included cutting the floor and concrete slab open in the laundry room and fixing the pipes. LSS was closed for pandemic safety at the time, and no one was using the laundry room or shower. The repair did not affect client's needs. The floor in the LSS laundry room was replaced.

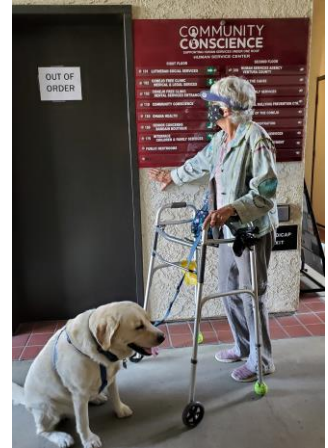
## Community Enhancement Grant



We were approved for a Community Enhancement Grant (CEG) from the City of Thousand Oaks for a landscaping water conserving project on the west side of the building. Here is a link to the video showing the project: [CEG 2019-2020](#). We removed irrigation that was constantly being tampered with in the parking lot area on the gas station side of the building. There was uneven dirt which would get washed into the parking lot when sprinklers would fail. The dirt was leveled and covered with gravel. Some butterfly bushes were added where ivy was sparse, and a drip line put in instead of irrigation. Some unsightly bushes on the opposite strip of land by the gas station and Irrigation were removed. We are conserving water and there is a nice clean appearance with gravel instead of dirt. There will be a savings in water usage and frequent repairs. Many thanks to the City of Thousand Oaks for this grant of \$3750.00.

## Elevator Modernization

In July of 2020 the elevator packing gland failed. This is part of the hydraulic mechanism that makes the elevator go up and down. The repair cost was \$5,104.00. The elevator was down for about three weeks. When this malfunction happened, it caused hydraulic fluid to spew all over the interior mechanisms. The elevator became slower and call buttons started to work intermittently. The Board of Trustees made the important decision to authorize the modernization of the elevator. The estimated costs are \$130,000.00. This will include a battery back up in the event of power outages that can trap people in the elevator. Additionally, fire alarms and a control panel for the fire department will be installed. All machines and controls will be replaced as well as new walls for the cab. The approved contract was signed and initial payment of \$35,000.00 was sent to Next Level Elevator. The Building Committee picked out materials for the walls of the cab. Next Level estimated the work will be done in January 2021. It will take 4-5 weeks to complete including an inspection from the State. Community Conscience was able to secure an Economic Injury Disaster Loan from the Small Business Administration for \$150,000.00 to cover the cost. We started a Go-Fund-Me campaign which brought in \$22,010 in October to get help from the community to pay back this 30-year loan. Many thanks to our supporters!



## Maximizing Coordination of Services

Our bi-monthly Tenant Networking & Communications Meetings continued on Zoom. We asked the tenants to share the changes they made in 2020 because of the pandemic. Many were adjusting well. Some of the challenges they faced included anxiety among staff /volunteers caused by the drastic changes in programs and having to learn with little experience how to do things virtually. The reported frustration and stress had greatly increased for clients who must stay home. The non-profits have added programs to help clients feel connected. The tenants expressed appreciation for the meetings. It gave them an opportunity to coordinate services in a time of great change. We continued having special guests, including Buen Vecino (Good Neighbor in Spanish), Brite Youth, and Safe Passage Heals. Several connections were made between our guests and housed agencies.



## Filling the Gaps in Services

It came to our attention there was no organization providing any type of food for the homeless in the Conejo Valley on Thanksgiving Day. When checking the sources that would normally provide food, each one thought the other one was doing something; however due to pandemic safety reasons and lack of volunteers there was not even a sack lunch program on Thanksgiving. Lutheran Social Services (LSS) was closed Wednesday before Thanksgiving through the holiday weekend. When it was mentioned to the Kiwanis Club of Thousand Oaks that there would be no food for the homeless, they wanted to help. McDonalds donated 40 breakfasts that were given away by Kiwanis volunteers from 9:00 am - 11:00 am on Wednesday, November 25<sup>th</sup>. They used the same location at our building that LSS uses for an organized outdoor line, social distancing, and masks worn. There was a similar gap the week before Christmas. Kiwanis provided food Monday, December 21<sup>st</sup> – Thursday, December 24<sup>th</sup> in the same manner. The recipients were really grateful!





## Kindness Garden



The security guard brought it to our attention that while people are waiting in line for services, they have written kind sentiments on several of the rocks under the majestic oak tree at the back entrance to the Human Services Center. When the Kiwanians were here, the person in charge of working with “Key Kids,” Christy Warner, told Robin Britt, Executive Director of Community Conscience they have an ongoing project of decorating rocks and placing them in the community as random acts of kindness. She asked if the youth could place decorated rocks under the Oak Tree to make a “Kindness “Garden. It was good to have youth do a project to brighten the day of others and teach them about Community Conscience. Soon tenants and other citizens, including the homeless, began to decorate the rocks also. This is an example of how one act of kindness can have a ripple effect. People standing in line to get services talk about the rocks and which are their favorites. Seniors from the neighboring assisted living care home walk over to visit the cheerful rocks.



## Youth Involvement

Community Conscience was contacted through email by Angel Mendoza, a Newbury Park High School student, who is in a Broadcasting class. He wanted to do a project on Community Conscience. In November Angel interviewed Margaret Fieweger and Robin Britt via Zoom. He came to Community Conscience on Wednesday, November 25<sup>th</sup> and took pictures of multiple areas of the building including food being given away to homeless. He told us he learned a lot. See Angel’s completed project here: [Angel Mendoza - Community Conscience Project](#)

## Payroll Protection Program & Covid-19 Relief Grant

Community Conscience applied for Payroll Protection Program (PPP) and was approved for \$14,652.00. Montecito Bank and Trust assisted with the process for the loan and forgiveness application. A second draw was also approved for \$16,000.00 which will apply to 2021. We also applied for the Covid 19 Business Relief Grant through the Ventura County Community Foundation and received \$5,000.00.

## Honors and Awards

Advisory Council member Frank Bellinghiere was one of the top five nominees of Senior Volunteer of the Year. There was no in person ceremony in 2020 so all nominees were honored on June 4<sup>th</sup> in the Acorn newspaper. Congratulations to Frank!

Trustee Justin Barkhuff was honored as one of the Greater Conejo Valley Chamber of Commerce’s 30 Under 30 Award. Justin showed great leadership and commitment as one of the co-chairs of the 2020 Mardi Gras Ball.

Past President Frank Brough was honored as one of the Acorn Newspaper’s Top Ten Award in 2020. Fran serves on multiple committees at Community Conscience and dedicates her life to helping others in our community.

## Organizational Governance

Community Conscience has a Board of Trustees which dedicates its time on a completely volunteer basis. The Executive Committee and Board of Trustees meet bi-monthly. All members are very active in the organization and participate by creating newsletters, updating our website and social media, fundraising, and projects. The following is a list of 2020 members.

### Executive Committee

Margaret Fieweger, President  
Don Phillipson, 1st Vice President  
Susan Kelly, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President  
Sal Sandoval, Treasurer  
Diane Milavetz, Asst. Treasurer  
Cheryl Klepper, Secretary  
Fran Brough, Past President



### Board of Trustees

Barbara Ashcraft	
Justin Barkhuff	Phyllis Rickert
Dave Crawford	Ed Sahakian
Dee Crawford	Jean Saunders
Pat Grant	Jacque Turner

### 2020 Advisory Council

Community Conscience has an Advisory Council which is comprised of community leaders. The purpose of the Advisory Council is to provide guidance and direction appropriate to the mission and operations of the organization. Advisory Council members are invited to participate in the organization's activities and events including Board of Trustee meetings where non-voting status is granted. Members serve a one-year term and may be reappointed annually with no term limits imposed.

Leonard Alexander	June Glasmeier	Peter Mogg
Frank Bellinghiere	Susan Holt	Maria Prescott
Bob Biery	Larry Horner	Hugo Roche
Grant Brimhall	George Hutchison	Doris Rufener
Chuck Cohen	Dr. Chris Kimball	Tex Ward
Frank Dawson M.D.	Ricki Mikkelsen	Joan Young
	Jerry Miller	

### Staff Members

Executive Director: Robin Britt  
Administrative Assistant: Marlene MacAulay

### City of Thousand Oaks Liaison

Francine Sprigel

## Financial Information

The primary sources of income received in the past several years by Community Conscience were proceeds from the Mardi Gras Ball and the lease agreement with the County of Ventura. In February 2020 attendance to the Mardi Gras Ball was low due to new Covid-19 concerns resulting in reduced proceeds. Community Conscience trustees believed the pandemic would still be a safety issue for large gatherings and voted to cancel the Mardi Gras Ball in 2021. The future financial health of the organization was the most important concern going forward. The loan, in addition to the Go-Fund-Me, Payroll Protection Program, and beginning of a Capital Campaign, enabled the organization to cover expenses without accessing reserves. Continued generous contributions from the community and our supporters made this possible.

The non-profit organizations each contributed \$0.35 per square foot to offset the utility costs. In past years the utility reimbursements covered between 60-80% of the actual utility costs and Community Conscience covered the rest. In 2020 with reduced use of the building due to stay-at-home orders and new energy efficient HVAC the reimbursements covered almost 100% of the costs. Only \$207.00 was covered by Community Conscience.

### Income

<b>Interest &amp; Dividends</b>	<b>\$5,161.13</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Donations, Fundraisers &amp; Grants</b>	<b>\$70,062.04</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>Ventura County Lease Agreement</b>	<b>\$112,709.00</b>	<b>22%</b>
<b>Utility Reimbursement Contributions</b>	<b>\$47,444.40</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>Mardi Gras Ball (Fiscal)</b>	<b>\$137,065.00</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>Economic Injury Disaster Loan</b>	<b>\$149,900.00</b>	<b>29%</b>

### Expenses

<b>Wages &amp; Salaries</b>	<b>\$59,112.65</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>Administrative Costs</b>	<b>\$51,437.79</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Building Insurance</b>	<b>\$7,736.70</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Utilities</b>	<b>\$47,651.90</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>Building Maintenance</b>	<b>\$85,475.81</b>	<b>24%</b>
<b>Capital Improvement</b>	<b>\$42,664.00</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>Fundraising Expenses</b>	<b>\$5,185.00</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Mardi Gras Ball (Fiscal)</b>	<b>\$55,321.86</b>	<b>16%</b>

## Ways You Can Help

There are many ways to support Community Conscience, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, TIN #95-3310410. Please check with your tax advisor.

**In Memorial and Honor Gifts:** Your charitable gift is given to honor the memory or perpetuate the memory of a loved one. Following this donation, a letter will be sent to the designated person or family notifying them of your caring contribution. The amount of the gift is always confidential.

**Donations of Cash:** Your gift of cash, check, or via credit card payment can put your money to work immediately to help people in our community who are in need. This help is through programs offered at the Community Conscience building. You will be provided with a letter for income tax purposes.

**Matching Gifts:** Double or triple your gift through company matching gift programs for employees and retirees. To find out if your employer has a matching gift program, speak to the Human Resources Department. You can maximize the value of your donation by following the company's procedures and identifying Community Conscience as the recipient.

**Donations of Stock:** Contribute stock that has appreciated in value and receive a tax deduction for the full market value. This will eliminate the capital gains taxes you would have incurred from a routine stock sale. The stocks must have been held for at least one year. If you own stocks or other investments that have decreased in value, you could sell them and donate the proceeds. You may be able to deduct the loss from other income for additional tax savings. Together the two deductions may be worth more than the current value of the investment. Please check with your tax advisor.

**Real Estate Donations:** Gift a second home or other real estate to Community Conscience either outright or by bequest. You can preserve your cash assets, receive significant tax and income advantages and make a charitable gift at the same time. The gift of a remainder trust of your property allows you to continue to live in the residence for the rest of your life.

**Donations of Tax-Deferred Retirement Plans and Life Insurance Policies:** Donating retirement assets is one of the best ways to avoid costly income and estate taxes for your heirs. Naming Community Conscience as a beneficiary (or contingent beneficiary after the death of your spouse) of all or a specified percentage of any retirement plan assets can save your estate both income and federal estate taxes. You may also designate Community Conscience as the sole, partial, or contingent beneficiary of a new life insurance policy or one you and your family no longer require.